

Facts About...

Source Reduction at Home

Maryland
Department
of the
Environment

The Facts

In 2005 Marylanders generated nearly 7.5 million tons of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW). To put the 7.5 million tons in perspective, that is enough waste to build a 3 feet wide by 6 feet tall wall 7,067 miles long. That's long enough for over 3 round trips from Baltimore to Miami. In 2005, Maryland disposed of 60.8% of the waste generated and recycled 39.2% of the waste generated. Of the material that was disposed, 43% was landfilled, 19% was incinerated and 38% was transported out of state.

What is Source Reduction? Simply stated, Source Reduction is the elimination of waste before it is created. It involves the design, manufacture, purchase, or use of materials and products to reduce the amount or toxicity of what is thrown away. Source Reduction can go a long way to reducing the costs associated with the transportation, disposal or recycling of waste. Best of all, practicing Source Reduction can save you money!

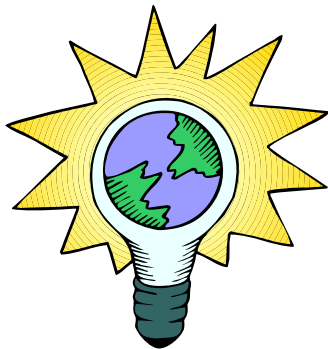
What Can You Do?

At the Store

- ✓ Use cloth or mesh bags to hold your purchases when shopping.
- ✓ Return hangers to dry cleaners for reuse.
- ✓ Purchase items in concentrated form, bulk, or economy sizes that use the least amount of packaging. *In addition to being cheaper and using less packaging, the use of these items eliminates the waste associated with many of the food containers used on single-serving items that cannot be recycled.*
- ✓ Purchase items in containers that have other uses.
- ✓ Purchase high-quality, long-lasting products.
- ✓ Purchase non-toxic items whenever possible.



At Home



- ✓ Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy-efficient long-lasting compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- ✓ Use rechargeable batteries whenever possible.
- ✓ Donate unwanted items (e.g., clothing, equipment, furniture, appliances).
- ✓ Repair older items rather than purchasing new ones.
- ✓ Reupholster furniture instead of purchasing new pieces.
- ✓ Use cloth towels, napkins and rags instead of disposable paper products that cannot be recycled.
- ✓ Avoid using disposable cups, plates and cutlery.
- ✓ Save bows, tissue paper, polystyrene peanuts, gift boxes, and newspaper to wrap gifts in the future.



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- ✓ Donate back-issues of magazines to schools for use in school projects or to a doctor's office for patients to read.
- ✓ Rent instead of buy infrequently-used tools or equipment.
- ✓ Use the backs of old envelopes for store lists or phone messages.
- ✓ Use thermoses and reusable containers for the food in your packed lunch.
- ✓ Reduce the amount of junk mail you receive at home by registering with the Direct Marketing Association's (DMA's) Mail Preference Service at www.dmaconsumers.org or by mail at Mail Preference Service, P.O. Box 282, Carmel, NY 10512. To reduce the number of credit offers you receive, call 1-888-5 OPT OUT (1-888-567-8688). To stop catalogs, call the company's toll-free number and have the mailing label handy.



In the Yard (see associated fact sheets on MDE's web page detailing composting guidelines)



- ✓ Start a backyard composting pile or use a composting bin to process organic wastes from your kitchen and yard. *Finished compost can be used as a soil amendment to improve soil quality in gardens or flowerbeds or as a top-dressing for lawn areas.*
- ✓ Leave grass trimmings on your lawn area to add nutrients back into the soil.
- ✓ Plant perennials instead of annuals that will have to be disposed of at the end of the year.
- ✓ Start an indoor redworm composter to process organic wastes from your kitchen. *Finished compost can be used to pot or fertilize houseplants.*
- ✓ Chip old, broken, or dead branches and trees and use the resulting mulch in your yard.
- ✓ Use alternatives in landscape design such as mulch islands, natural areas, and ground covers.

*MDE would like to thank the Anne Arundel County Dept. of Public Works Waste Management Services
Recycling Division for the use of their source reduction informational sheets.*



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